

34th CERFP participates in multi-state disaster exercise

Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen provided search and extraction, decontamination and medical support during Operation Highball, a multi-state special focus exercise July 9-12, 2019, at the River Road Training Site in New Castle, Delaware.

The Soldiers and Airmen are assigned to the Richmond-based 34th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-Yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package, one of several state and federal agencies participating in the multi-day disaster exercise.

Operation Highball simulated the derailment of a train carrying hazardous chemicals in a populated area, causing a significant number of casualties as well as a structure collapse. Teaming with members of the Delaware and Pennsylvania National Guards and several civilian agencies, the CERFP went to work.

Role players acted as civilian survivors with various injuries, some able to walk and some non-ambulatory. The CERFP's search and extraction team secured the scene and helped rescue the survivors from the rubble pile. After that, they were triaged and decontaminated before being treated for their injuries.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/16/13782/>



Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen provide search and extraction, decontamination and medical support July 10, 2019, as part of Operation Highball, a multi-state special focus exercise in New Castle, Delaware.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

116th IBCT conducts eXportable Combat Training Capability rotation

Virginia and Kentucky National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are honing their combat skills during the eXportable Combat Training Capability Rotation 19-4 scheduled for July 13 through August 2, 2019, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/14/13777/>

91st Cyber Brigade completes rollout of ShadowNet enterprise solution

The Virginia National Guard's 91st Cyber Brigade completed the nationwide rollout of its ShadowNet enterprise solution July 19, 2019, with the integration of the 125th Cyber Protection Battalion into the solution's virtual private network.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/19/13811/>

VDF conducts communications and security training in Lynchburg

Members of the all-volunteer Virginia Defense Force conducted training on the communications systems and security capabilities they could use during emergency response operations July 13, 2019, in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/13/13764/>

Son follows father into Virginia Army National Guard

Pvt. Andrew Lee Ross followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted into the Virginia Army National Guard July 2, 2019, at the Military Entrance Processing Station at Fort Lee, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/24/13807/>

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429th BSB competes in regional food service competition

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Danville-based Headquarters Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team competed in the Philip A. Connelly Food Service Competition July 19, 2019, during eXportable Combat Training Capability Rotation 19-4 at Fort Pickett, Virginia. The 429th is competing for the regional award and the opportunity to further compete for the national prize.

The 429th's food service specialists, already living in the field as part of XCTC, began the competition by selecting a site for their kitchen and field sanitation location. Under the watchful eye of multiple judges, they prepared a meal for about 70 troops.

The team starts the competition with the maximum number of points. From there, the team of evaluators dock points for mistakes.

"Everybody starts at 1,000 points, then if there are things they aren't doing correctly or need to improve on, points get pulled away," said Capt. Jeremy Osborn, company commander.

Though it is a food service competition, Osborn explained the presentation and taste of the food is only about a third of the possible points.

"It's site selection, it's preparation and field sanitation," said Osborn. "We've got a generator mechanic, so it's how well they know the equipment. It's how well the cooks know their duties. There's a whole lot of things that go into the process of feeding the Army."

Working as a team, the cooks chopped and diced vegetables and prepared baked goods, while others made sure all kitchen equipment was clean and sanitary. Everyone involved made sure anyone entering the field kitchen, including the evaluators, had washed their hands.

"Coming together as a team is a big plus," said Sgt. Maj. Gregory Mason, the state food advisor, who has overseen VNG's participation in the Connelly competition for several years. "Nobody flew off the handle here. Everybody worked together as a team."

The day of the competition saw challenging conditions, with high humidity and temperatures approaching triple digits. The field kitchens were even hotter. According to Chief Warrant Officer 4 Tollie H. Yoder, a Connelly evaluator and a member of the Nebraska National Guard, that tough atmosphere made the team's cohesion even more impressive.

"You'd be surprised what you see, especially when you get out into a field environment, a week into it with this heat. Tempers start getting short, spaces start getting tight," said Yoder as he addressed the 429th's cooks after the meal. "You guys have a good team. You guys are working well together, you guys are not arguing and bickering."

The judged meal included stuffed pork chops, green beans with bacon, salad, minestrone, sautéed potatoes and corn bread. During the meal preparation, Yoder and other evaluators quizzed the cooks on their knowledge of the ingredients, sanitation practices and food safety information. Yoder looked on as the cooks took



Virginia National Guard Soldiers prepare a meal while competing in the Philip A. Connelly Food Service Competition July 19, 2019, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

the temperature of every item prepared to make sure it was safe for consumption.

Mason says he likes the unit's chances.

"As far as with the heat index like it is and the atmosphere, I think they've done real well," said Mason. "I think we've got a good chance to win the region and win nationals."

The 429th should find out if they will advance to the national finals by the end of August. If they advance, they'll repeat the process again for a different set of evaluators. Participating in the competition also gives the team invaluable practical experience in a very important part of the Army's mission.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/23/13793/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Pre-Warrant Officer Course scheduled for Aug. 9-11

<https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/09/13704/>

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Photos: AG visits with aviators during annual training

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